

The John W. Rea House (Doremus House)  
681 Goffle Road  
Hawthorne, Passaic County, New Jersey

HABS-NJ-178

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PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA  
District of New Jersey

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Seymour Williams, F.A.I.A., District Officer  
133 Central Avenue, Rahway, New Jersey

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N.J.

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Owner: The Passaic County Park Commission

Date of Erection: About 1810

Architect: Unknown

Builder: Henry Doremus (1754-1833) or son Hassel  
Doremus (1787-1853)

Present Condition: Original with roof rebuilt and  
modern addition at rear

Number of Stories: One and one-half and cellar

Materials of Construction:

Foundation - local brown sandstone

Exterior walls - coursed ashlar to eave line all  
around, and frame gable ends above that line with  
modern wood shingles covering them

Interior walls - lath and plaster on wood studding

Roof - gambrel (lately rebuilt, as indicated by  
eaves and projecting cornice of gable ends and  
of original dormer windows). Modern roofing.  
Front porch added about 1880

Historical Data:

Title to the land on part of which this  
house was later erected has been traced to Hessel  
Doremus who was born 10 July 1723, second son of  
Hendrick Doremus and his wife Annatie Hesselse of  
Acquackanonk (Passaic), and who died 24 October  
1801, aged 78-3-14\* having married 14 June 1745

Geesie Westervelt of Wagaraw in Saddle River Township (now Hawthorne), who died 14 April 1812, aged 86-11-21\*. After marriage, he settled in the latter place, on this farm which extended from the river to the Van Winkle line, being 200 acres at the Goffle (Brook) apparently having received it from his wife's family. The site of his dwelling was occupied by that of Adam Vreeland in 1897. By his will dated 6 March 1792, Hessel Doremus above-said, "of the Goffle in the precinct of Saddle River, yeoman", devised to his wife Geesie the sole management and income of his estate during her widowhood, providing that she grant to his son Henry Doremus or his heirs such "privileges, advantages and emoluments of my estate during the time and term aforesaid as my said son Henry at this present time possesses and enjoys with remainder to him, he to pay certain legacies to the children of his sister Fcytie Hopper, deceased, and to his sister Antje wife of Peter Hopper. The children of Hessel Doremus were recorded baptized in the Reformed Dutch Church of Paramus as 1. Henry, of whom further, 2. Annatje born 4 Nov. 1750, who married Peter Hopper, and 3. Feytie who married John Hopper.

Henry Doremus, the son and heir abovenamed was born 10 April 1754 in Wagaraw and resided on the paternal estate until he removed to Pacquanac in the same township where he died 4 September 1833, having married Margrietje Hennion, born 30 May 1759, who died 19 January 1847 at the home of her son Henry in the same place. The will of Henry Doremus dated 10 June 1830 and proved 1833 devises to his wife Margaret the use of one-half the house where he then lived, \$200 and numerous articles of personal property; to his sons Hessel and Henry Jr., and grandson Henry I. various parts of his farm and of land upon Berry's Creek; to his son Hessel "all the farm whereon I formerly lived and whereon my said son Hessel now lives". The children of Henry Doremus were 1. —

\*Gravestones in Reyerson Family burial ground on farm of Richard DeGray, in the Boro of Hawthorne, copied 1882. See Clayton and Nelson, His. of Bergen & Passaic Counties, NJ, p. 562.

Johannes Hennion, b. 14 Jan. 1780, d. 17 Oct. 1803 in Hawthorne, 2. Hessel of whom further, and 3. Henry b. 17 Dec. 1793, d. Sept. 1850 in Pacquanac.

Hessel (or Hassel) Doremus, son and devisee abovenamed, was born 19 February 1787, was living in this house in 1830, having then been devised the 200 acre ancestral farm at the Goffle, but removed to Ramapo, Bergen County, in 1852, and to Hohokus in same County, before 22 September 1853, on which date administration upon his estate was granted to his son John H. Doremus. He married 1st Catherine Berry who died 6 October 1836, aged 49-4-13, and 2nd Mary Young, widow of John Y. Dater of Hohokus, and she died 24 August 1870. The children and heirs of this Hessel Doremus were 1. John H. Doremus, of whom further, and 2. Catherine Doremus, born 26 August 1812, who married Aaron Van Saun of Paterson Township, Passaic County. By deed of 1st February 1854, the daughter Catherine Van Saun of Paterson conveyed to her brother John H. Doremus of Manchester Township, for \$2000, the property which she had inherited from their father's estate, being the 150 acre farm east of Wagaraw Brook, bounded north by land of Cornelius Van Winkle, east by that of George Ryerson, and south by that of Aaron Terhune, and on which stands the house here considered.

John H. Doremus, the son and grantee abovenamed, was born 24 March 1810 in this house, moved thence to Paterson where he kept a livery stable in Prince Street near Market, and died about 1886 at the home of his son Andrew in Florida. He married 1st Catherine Hopper who died 17 May 1851 aged 40-10-9, 2nd Martha Hopper, her sister, 3rd Rachel Zabriskie, widow of John Van Houten, and 4th Amelia McAlister. (a) By a deed of 10 May 1859, this John H. Doremus and wife Rachel of Manchester Township (and evidently residing in the house there which is here considered) conveyed to Margaret Ann Rea of

(a) Genealogy of the Doremus Family in America, William Nelson, Paterson, N.J., 1897, pp. 19, 46, 87, 133 and 163.

Franklin Township, Bergen County, for \$10,000, the same homestead property which he had purchased from his sister in 1854 as above stated.

Margaret A. Rea and her husband John W. Rea, of Manchester Township evidently occupying the homestead purchased, sold the same to William Oakley of New York City for \$25,000 by deed of 1st November 1868. But as a result of legal proceedings, the sheriff seized the property and conveyed it back to John W. Rea and wife on 16 September 1881, they began again of Franklin Township then. The will of this John W. Rea of Franklin, dated 29 March 1872, devised to his wife Margaret Ann all his real estate in trust during her lifetime, and afterward to his son Frank E. Rea. From that tract a 3 acre plot at the south-east corner of Goodwinville Road and Nelson Avenue in the Borough of Hawthorne (on which stands the house here considered) was conveyed by deed of 10 June 1904 to the Rea Land Company by the Sheriff following a decree from the Court of Chancery. By deed of 17 March 1920, that grantee passed the same to John Knapik and wife of the Borough of Hawthorne the last owners of record. We are informed by the Secretary that the Passaic County Park Commission acquired this property from Knapik and wife on 1st July 1930.

For identity of location of this house as described in the several succeeding records above cited, it should be noted that prior to 1837 it was in Saddle River Township, Bergen County, from 1838 to 1896 the same place was named Manchester Township, Passaic County, and thereafter the Borough of Hawthorne.

#### Bibliography:

A search of title in the Land and Probate records of Bergen and Passaic Counties by Joseph Benenati, H.A.B.S. abstractor

Lewis H. Cook  
Supervising Historian

Approved:

Seymour Williams  
SEYMOUR WILLIAMS, F.A.I.A.  
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